Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System,
Plant 4, Worker Cottage
(Building No. 116)
Bishop Creek
Bishop Vicinity
Inyo County
California

HAER No. CA-145-4-G

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, Plant 4 **HAER No. CA-145-4-G**
Worker Cottage, Building 116
Bishop Creek
Bishop Vicinity
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Location: Near Bishop Creek in North 1/2 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 19, Township 7 South, Range 32 East, M.D.M, Inyo County, California (UTM 11/367115/4131690), in the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the town of Bishop, California, and 225 air miles due north of Los Angeles.

Date of Construction: ca. 1920-1928, 1966

Builder: Nevada-California Power Company

Present Owner: Southern California Edison Company
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

Original Use: Worker Cottage

Present Use: Worker Cottage

Significance: Building 116, Plant 4 (formerly Building No. 23, Plant 4), is an example of early worker's housing at the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System. It contributes to an understanding of the historic character of the physical and social environment of the Plant 4 compound. Built in 1905, Plant 4 was the first on the Bishop Creek System, and it remains the system's operating headquarters. This house is one of six in the Period Revival style in the System. The Bishop Creek System is considered significant for its role: (1) in the expansion of hydroelectric generation technology, (2) in the development of eastern California, and (3) in the development of long-distance power transmission and distribution.

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Rosemead, CA 91770

Date: July 31, 1997

I. DESCRIPTION

Building 116, Plant 4 is a small, one story Period Revival style cottage located about 390 feet northeast of the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System Plant 4 powerhouse on the west side of the main Plant 4 residential street. This cottage was part of a residential enclave of 12 houses, many of which have been demolished, where the Plant 4 workers lived (Photo 145-4-G-1). It has been altered from its original condition (SCE Drawing 507952).

Building 116 is a near mirror of its next-door neighbor, building 117. It is separated from the main Plant 4 residential street by a concrete-laid rock wall and a small yard landscaped in grass and small and medium sized shrubs (photo 145-4-G-2). It is accessed in the front (east side) by a concrete walkway and steps leading to the front porch. The projecting concrete-decked porch is framed with a criss-cross stick balastrade and simple roof support posts; the front steps have welded-pipe handrails (photos 145-4-G-3 and 145-4-G-4). The original house had a shed-roof dormer projecting from the northeast elevation (SCE Drawing 507952); the dormer was removed as part of the 1966 construction of a gable-roof addition to the northeast side of the house (photo 145-4-G-5).

The steeply-pitched, hipped-roofed, is covered with composition shingles (the hipped-roof portion of the housed was originally covered with wood shingles); the roof over the front porch is trimmed with a boxed cornice and frieze. A brick chimney with hipped sheet-metal cap and circular metal vent crowns the top ridge of the house (photo 145-4-G-6). This chimney has apparently caused a dark smoke stain on both the east and west sides of the roof. Unlike building 117, building 116 has a basement (photo 145-4-G-7). Original wood shingle siding has been covered with asbestos siding.

The original portion of the house used 3-light over 3-light and 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows. The plans for the house also showed a paneled and glazed front door flanked by 10-light full-length fixed windows (SCE Drawing 507952). This front door and flanking windows have been replaced by a sliding-glass door (photo 145-4-G-8). Windows in the 1966 addition are sliding-glass.

The completely remodeled 12 x 29 foot living room includes a 14 foot northeastem extension as a result of the 1966 addition. The original northeast end wall of this room is delineated by a projecting weight-bearing beam running southeast-northwest across the ceiling. A door through the southwest wall enters the kitchen; an adjacent door on the northwest wall enters bedroom no. 2 (photo 145-4-G-9). Flooring in this room is wall-to-wall carpet. Two ceiling fixtures illuminate the room.

The 12 x 17 foot remodeled kitchen features 1950s style built-in cabinets and a double sink that replaced the originals shown in architectural renderings (photo 145-4-G-10, 145-4-G-11, and SCE Drawing 570952). The 3-light over 3-light, double-hung, wood-framed window above the sink is original. A paneled and glazed door through the southwest wall provides access to the back of the house (photo 145-4-G-12). Two sets of paired 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows occupy adjacent walls at the south corner of the room. Flooring is linoleum framed by baseboard. Two ceiling fixtures and a single wall fixture above the sink illuminate the room.

The 10 x 12 foot bedroom no. 1 is accessed from the kitchen by way of a panel door (photo 145-4-G-13). The original plans called for a walk-in closet on the northeast wall behind the entry door. This closet has been remodeled into a recessed closet with a cabinet above and drawer below. A built-in full-length cabinet has also been installed in the north corner next to the door to the bathroom. This room features original 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows, crown molding, decorative wood stripping on the walls (which, like the original parts of building 117, formerly extended to the ceiling), and wide base-board (photo 145-4-G-14). Flooring is wall-to-wall carpet. A single ceiling fixture provides illumination.

The 7 x 8 foot bathroom is accessible from either bedroom no. 1 or bedroom no. 2 (photos 145-4-G-15 and 145-4-G-16). Although completely remodeled, the new bathtub, sink, and toilet are in their original locations. The original window has been replaced with a sliding-glass model. Flooring is linoleum framed by baseboard. Two wall fixtures above the sink provide illumination.

The 10 x 12 foot bedroom no. 2 is a mirror of bedroom no. 1. It is accessed from the living room (photo 145-4-G-17). It is distinguished by a full compliment of the wood wall and ceiling stripping that was part of the original interior decoration for every room in the house. Only one of the three original 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows in this room remains (photo 145-4-G-18); the other two (a paired arrangement) were eliminated as part of the 1966 addition construction.

The 10 x 14 foot bedroom no. 3 represents the west half of the 1966 addition that also lengthened the living room. This room is accessed from bedroom no. 2 by way of a flush door through the southwest wall (photo 145-4-G-19). A floor-to-ceiling built-in closet and cabinets occupy the rest of the southwest wall. Aluminum-framed sliding-glass windows pierce the northwest and northeast walls (photo 145-4-G-20). Flooring is wall-to-wall carpet framed by a narrow baseboard. A single ceiling fixture illuminates the room.

The project area is about five miles southwest of the town of Bishop, Inyo County, California. The Bishop Creek System is primarily located along the south, middle, and north forks of Bishop Creek on the steep eastem slopes of the southem Sierra Nevada Range. Plant 4 is one of five plants sited at varying elevations along Bishop Creek. Situated in the middle of the Bishop Creek System, Plant 4 is northeast of Plants 2 and 3, and southwest of Plants 5 and 6.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Please refer to the "Historical Context" section in the general Historic American Engineering Record for the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System (HAER No. CA-145) for historical information regarding Bishop Creek Plant 4.

Each of the five Bishop Creek power plants, and Control Station, were originally developed with an associated residential complex occupied by operating and maintenance crews; all have now been removed with exception of small remaining enclaves at Plant 4, Control Station, and a single house at Plant 6. Several of these houses, such as Building 116, Plant 4, were constructed during the 1920s to accommodate additional workers needed to operate the power plants after the final Bishop Creek expansion phase. Building 116, Plant 4, was built between 1920 after and before 1928 (Theodoratus Cultural Research 1988:A-99). The company development of employee living areas, especially at Plant 4, permitted comprehensive planning seldom seen in privately developed residential areas during this period. The setting of Building 116, Plant 4, still retains many elements of the old residential planning in this area, including picturesque curving streets, houses sited on terraces with stone retaining walls, manicured front lawns with unified groupings of shade trees, and integrally designed lighting standards.

III. SOURCES

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1969 American Architecture Since 1780. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This Historic American Engineering Record documentation of Building 116, Plant 4 Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, was undertaken because the building represents excess housing. SCE has automated the Bishop Creek power plants. Automation of the power plants has made it unneeessary to have on-site crews, thus, residential units like this cottage have become obsolete.

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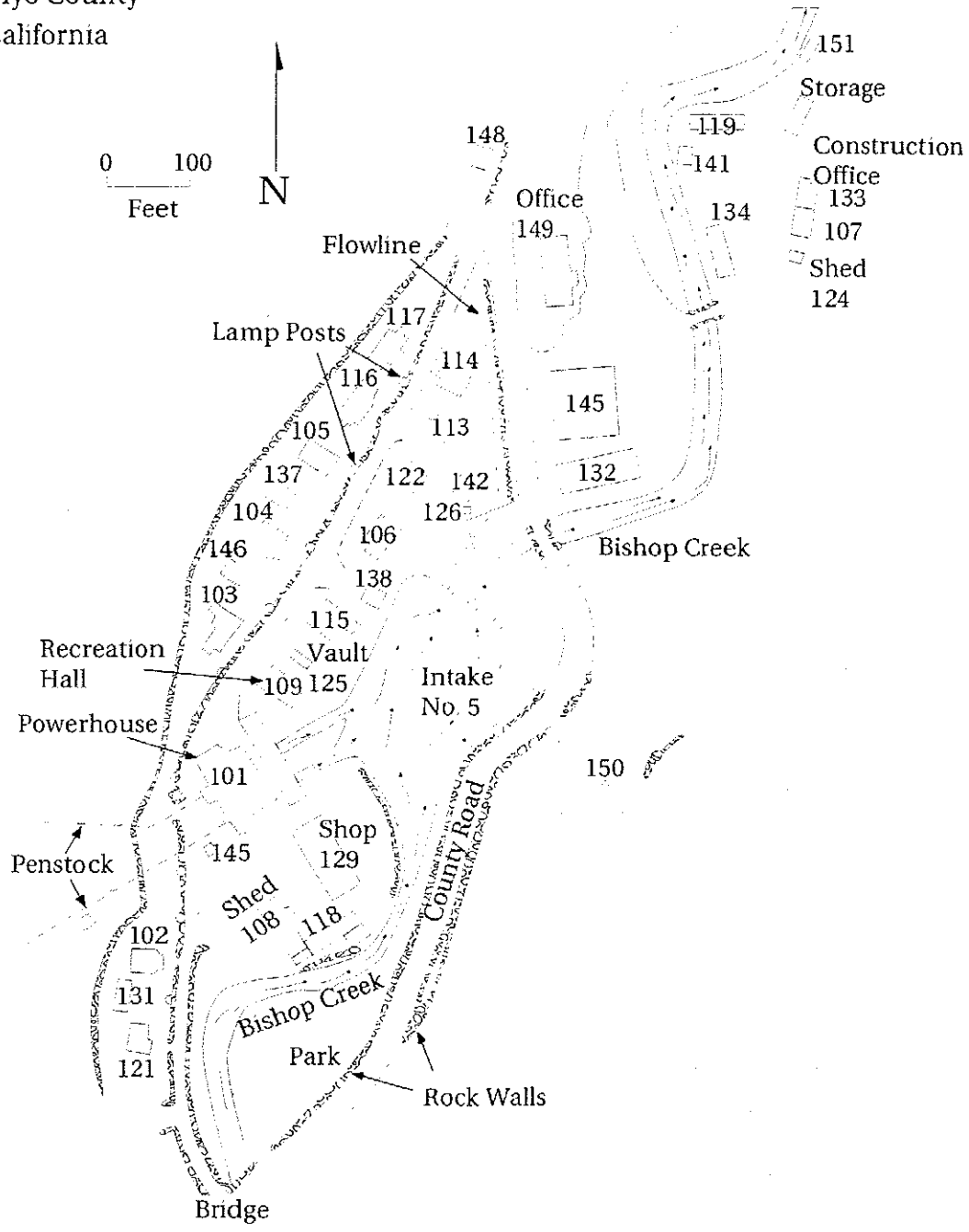

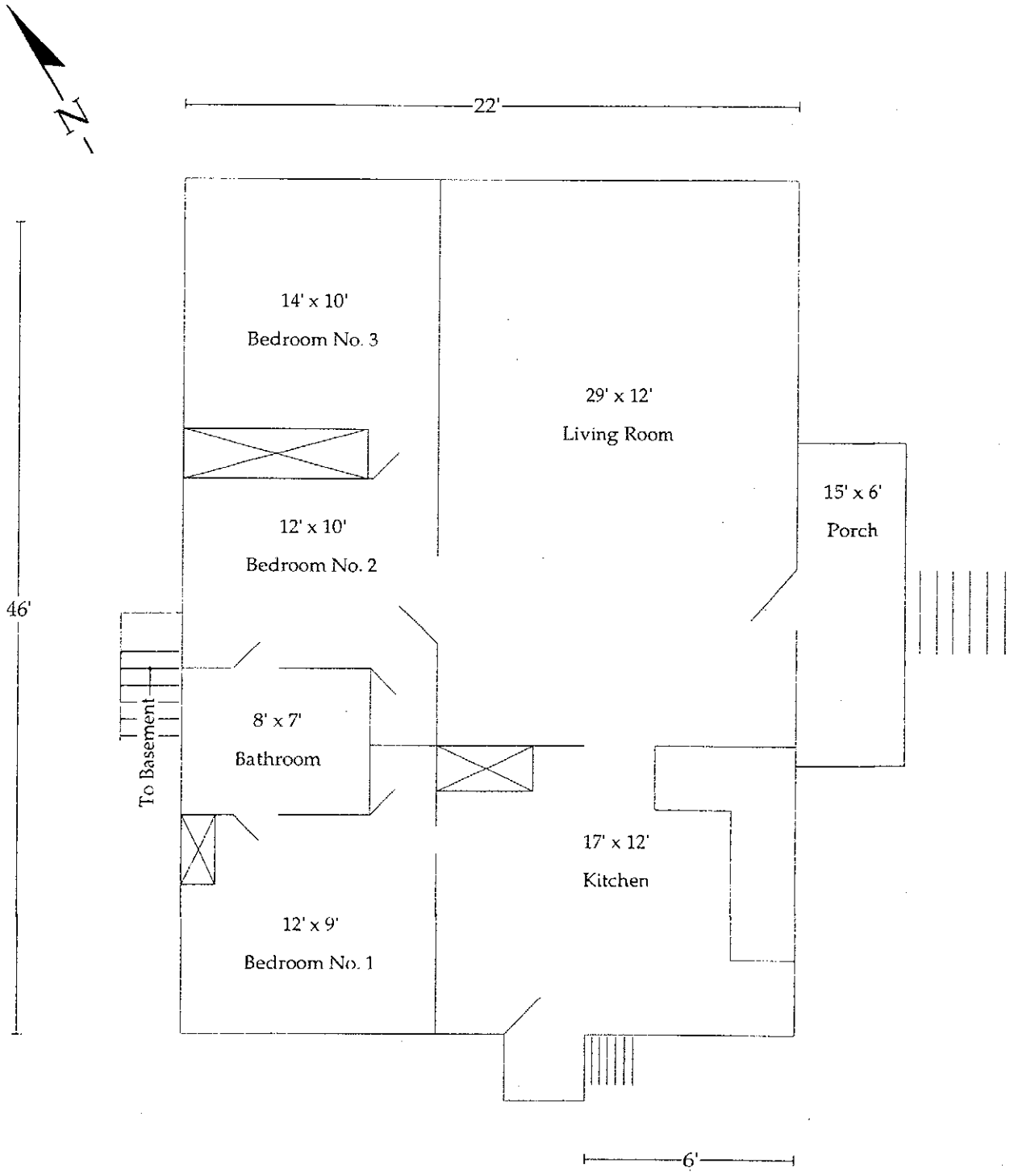
N
22'
46'
14' x 10'
Bedroom No. 3
29' x 12'
Living Room
15' x 6'
Porch
12' x 10'
Bedroom No. 2
To Basement
8' x 7'
Bathroom
17' x 12'
Kitchen
12' x 9'
Bedroom No. 1
6'